(b) and (c). It may be possible to take up construction work of the FTI building only after sufficient funds have been located for the purpose.

Telephone Connections in Bihar

245. SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state.

(a) the number of persons applied for telehone connections in Bihar during the last two years, district-wise;

(b) the number of persons to whom telephone connections have been provided during the last two years and the number of persons yet to be provided with telephone connection, district-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to provide more telephone connections in the State particularly in Ranchi?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (c) Information is being compiled and will be placed on the table of the House.

Survey for Third Railway Track

246. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have conducted any survey for the cnstruction of third rail track between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to reduce the pressure of rail traffic;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). Yes, Sir. Preliminary Engg.-cum-Traffic Survey for construction of a 3rd line between Virar and Ahmedabad has recently been completed and the survey report is under examination in the Ministry. Further action would be considered once the results of the survey are finalised.

[English]

Shortage of Steel

247. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is shortage of steel in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the action taken by the Government to meet the shortage; and

(d) the ex-factory price, the CIF and FOB price of import and export of steel?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise in view of (a) above.

(d) The stockyard price is a better index as compared to ex-factory price while drawing a comparison with the cost of import. The stockyard prices of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), indicative CIF prices and landed cost of imports of some of the items of steel in September '96 were as under :

(Rs. per tonne)

	Stockyard Prices	CIF Prices	Landed Cost of Imports
Wire Rod IS-2062 (6 mm)	16356	11930	18392
Beams 125x70	16471	15789	24277
Plates (22 mm)	21646	17183	26417
HR Coils 3.15 DD (K)	19058	13684	20264
CR Coils 0.63 DD (K)	24061	18246	28023
GP Sheets (0.63 mm)	27657	21403	32838

Export price of iron and steel depends upon several factors such as demand in the domestic and international markets, prevailing domestic and international prices, exchange rate of rupee vis-a-vis other foreign currencies, incentives available for export etc.

[Translation]

Halt of Train at Dihri-on-Sone Railway Station

248. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the train running from Gaya to Dihri-on-Sone remains halted at Dihri-on-Sone for eleven hours;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to extend this train upto Garhwa, up and down; and

(c) if so, the time by which it is likely to be extended?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Gaya-Dehri-on-Sone Passenger has a lie over period of 9 hours and 55 minutes at Dehri-on-Sone.

(b) Its extension to Garhwa Road is presently not feasible due to operational reasons.

(c) Does not arise.

[English]

Doordarshan Kendra, Kerala

249. SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Allappadi Doordarshan Kendra of Kerala is under construction;

(b) if so, the progress made so far; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (c). A suitable site for the LPT project at Attappadi in Pallakhad district of Kerala has been taken over and departmental works are in progress. As per the present indications, the installation work on the project is expected to be completed by March, 1997.

[Translation]

Poor Maintenance of Telephone in Maharashtra

250. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether telephone facilities in a number of villages in Maharashtra are on the verge of closure due to its poor maintenance;

(b) if so, the schemes of the Government for maintaining the telephones in goodshape;

(c) whether the Government propose to replace the old cross-bar sytem with fully electronic system in the State; and

(d) if so, the time by which the cross-bar system is likely to be replaced?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir. Only some village Public Telephones (VPTs) have been reported faulty.

(b) The Telecom Circles have been asked to enter into Annual Maintenance contracts with the manufacturers. To monitor the performance of VPTs regorous testing procedure have been prescribed.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) By the end of 9th Five Year Plan.

[English]

Completion of Railway Projects in North-Eastern States

251. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the physical progress of the different railway projects in North Eastern States;

(b) the names of the projects proposed to be completed during the current years; and

(c) the details of allocation made during the current year, project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (c). Different Railway Projects in North Eastern States :

Progress of Railway Projects in N.E. States :

Name of the Project	Physical Progress	Budget Allocation in current year
New Lines		
1. Jogighopa-Guwahati Rail-cum-Road Bridge across Brahmaputra at Jogighopa alongwith BG Railway Line from Jogighopa to Guwahati.	i. Overall Progress 72.30%. ii. Rail-cum-Road-Bridge 94%. iii. Railway Line 51.05%.	27.00 crores
2. Kumarghat-Agartala	Nil	01.00 crores
3. Dudhnoi-Deepa	Nil	05.00 crores
Gauge Conversion		
4. Lumding to Dibrugarh including link branches (628 kms)	47.2%	88.00 crores
5. New Guwahati-Lumding including Chaparmukh-Haibargaon linked branch (202.11 Km)	99.5%	05.19 crores
6. Lumding-Silchar including	Nil new alignment between Migrendisa - Ditokcherra (198 Km)	10.00 crores